

# Last Call for Sunshine and Air

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Contributed by: harrisp

By Paul Harris  
for Vive le Canada

I have a theory. All those nations around the world who elect governments should save themselves the bother. They could substitute a simple dictatorship (and hope they get a benign one) or continue with the sort of government infrastructure we 'civilized' people claim to have, without the bother of costly and disruptive elections by choosing government by lottery; you know, the woman or man with the shortest straw has to serve. Make it mandatory, make refusal to serve punishable by imprisonment. In addition to saving nations a lot of money and needless anxiety, we would surely end up with something at least as good as we have now.

By any standards of reason, common sense, common decency, or basic humanity our governments have been close to total failures. Oh sure, there have been occasional bright moments and times when mankind has actually managed to appear as though it has more intelligence than, say, a bowling pin, but these have been rare.

Whether we live in so-called free countries or under the heel of someone's jackboot, we have been appallingly served by our governments. And we've mostly been dumb enough to smile while they were doing it. The only real point of having a government, whatever form it takes, is to help manage society for the betterment and advancement and protection of that society. If its only purpose is to institutionalize the power of the guy with the biggest stick, then we have a lot of nerve claiming ourselves superior to the rest of the animal world.

What is prompting this article is the total failure of the world's governments to protect their citizens from a systematic assault by the corporate community. Those folks who protest at World Trade Organization (WTO) meetings or who think the International Monetary Fund (IMF) minions should be turned into compost are largely right. Governments all round the planet have managed to sell their collective souls to international businesses who are almost inevitably beyond their control, or anyone else's control. Any pretence of democracy is merely wishful thinking when international treaties give foreign businesses the right to dictate policy and law to local government. This is not merely rhetoric: that is exactly what is accomplished by the treaties pimped by the WTO and others.

Control of water is fast becoming the latest attack upon humanity and a time is very nearly approaching when only those with sufficient cash in their pockets will be able to obtain this most important requirement of life.

Canada has one of the most abundant supplies of fresh water in the world and yet even here, we are beginning to surrender control of our destiny to international business. We have all taken for granted this most valued resource and we have spent it like, well, water. We all know the planet's surface is mostly water (if you really need to know the percentage, look it up) but we also know that only a very tiny portion of that water is potable. And yet we continue to pollute it at an alarming rate in an astonishing example of a creature fouling its own nest in complete disregard for what the future will hold.

International business pushes forward a principle which is generally known as the Washington Consensus; this is a model of economics rooted in the belief that liberated market economies and unbridled corporate control of our existence is the only viable economic choice for the whole planet. This means everything is for sale and water is poised to become the petroleum of the 21st century. Water is being commodified and privatized so that it can be put up for sale where the market can determine its future and its price.

According to Fortune magazine, the current annual profits of the water industry is about 40% of those of the petroleum industry and at this stage, only about 5% of the world's potable water is controlled by those companies. Wait until they get the rest of it. Fortune also notes the World Bank and the IMF are increasingly forcing Third World countries to abandon their public water systems and contract with the giant corporations in order to be eligible for any sort of debt relief.

Essentially, international business is buying up the very lifeblood of the world with the cooperation of the world's governments. If anyone reading this article can't foresee the eventual wars of survival that this is almost certain to foment, then I'm afraid you're going to be in for a nasty surprise.

The real point of this article, though, is to make an announcement. In order to exercise my own entrepreneurial aspirations, I am applying for an international patent right for sunshine and air. This is a gravy train I would hate to miss and as soon as I get patent approval, I'm going to rent or lease my sunshine and air back to you. If you don't want to pay my price, stay in the dark and hold your breath.

Don't say you haven't been warned.

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